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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICANTS: Chad C. Smutney et al : GROUP ART UNIT: 3731
SERIAL NO: 09/757,138 :
FILING DATE: January 9, 2001 : EXAMINER: R. Ghafoorian
TITLE: BLUNTABLE NEEDLE ASSEMBLY WITH :
OPEN-ENDED BLUNTING PROBE : ATTY DKT: P-1656

RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION

Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

August 15, 2002

Dear Sir:

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TEC

This paper is responsive to the office action mailed April 24, 2002 in the captioned application. Enclosed herewith, on a separate paper, is a petition for an extension of time to August 24, 2002 for reply to the office action, under 37 CFR 1.136, together with payment of the fee therefor.

AMENDMENTS

Cancel claims 13 and 14, and amend claims 3, 6, 11 and 15 as follows. Enclosed herewith, in a separate paper, is a version of each amended claim marked up to show the changes entered by the following amendments relative to the previous versions.

3. (Amended) The needle assembly of claim 1 comprising a detent and a stay engagement between the needle component and the blunting component, the detent being movable between (i) a locking position in which it may bear against the stay and prevent the needle assembly from moving to the sharpened configuration and (ii) an unlocked position which permits the needle assembly to move to the sharpened configuration.

6. (Amended) The needle assembly of any one of claims 1, 2, 3 or 4 wherein the shuttle member is perforated to permit fluid flow from the rearward open end of the blunting probe therein to the fluid chamber.